

# Singer in the Shadow



Robert E. Howard

\$7.95

## SINGERS IN THE SHADOWS

by

Robert E. Howard

*Singers In the Shadows* was compiled and titled by Robert E. Howard himself in 1928. It was submitted to Albert & Charles Boni, a New York publishing house, who returned it, stating that they were not publishing verse at that time. There is no evidence that Howard ever submitted the book to another publisher.

In 1970, Donald M. Grant published an edition of 500 copies of the book. It sold out in a matter of months, and since that time has been one of the rarest of all Howard books, with copies often selling for over \$100.

This new edition has been entirely retypeset and newly illustrated by the rising young artist, Marcus Boas. It features twenty Howard poems, written with the same magic that made his Conan series such a tremendous success.

Limited Edition to 1500 copies.

Cover and interior illustrations by Marcus Boas.

Science Fiction Graphics Inc.  
Publisher

New York      Chicago





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by ROBERT E. HOWARD

Illustrated by Marcus Boas

SCIENCE FICTION GRAPHICS INC.  
NEW YORK, CHICAGO  
1977

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## INTRODUCTION

During his relatively brief lifetime, Robert Ervin Howard (1906-1936) wrote a considerable amount of verse. I have in my files copies of 128 previously published poems and 290 unpublished poems. And there is evidence that an undetermined number of poetry manuscripts were inadvertently destroyed in 1943.

Howard's interest in poetry probably stemmed from the fact that his mother loved poetry and recited it to him when he was a child. When he first began to write, it was only natural that he try his hand at poetry. One of his poems saw publication in the local newspaper in 1923, two years before his first professionally published story appeared in *Weird Tales*. He stated that while he was attending the academy at Howard Payne College—in 1926-27—he sadly neglected his schoolwork in order to “write poetry and play seven-up with the boarding house gang.” Concerning his ability as a poet, he said, depreciatingly: “I’m no poet, but I was born with a

knack of making little words rattle together and I've gotten a lot of pleasure from my jinglings. Poetizing's work and travail, rhyming's pleasure and holiday. I never devoted over thirty minutes to any rhyme in my life, though I've spent hours memorizing the poetry of other men." One of his friends recently told me that Howard memorized Coleridge's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" with two readings, quite a feat, if true.

His favorite poets were: Robert W. Service, Kipling, John Masefield, James Elroy Flecker, Vansittart, Sidney Lanier, Edgar Allen Poe, the Benets, Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Francis Ledwedge, Omar Khayyam, Joe Moncure March, Natalia Crane, Henry Herbert Knibbs, Lord Dunsany, G.K. Chesterton, Bret Harte, Oscar Wilde, Longfellow, Tennyson, Swinburne, Viereck, Alfred Noyes, and H.P. Lovecraft. More than fifty volumes of verse and drama were in his library when it was presented to Howard Payne College shortly after his death.

But Howard was trying to earn a living by writing, and there was no money in verse. *Weird Tales* occasionally bought a poem, paying twenty-five cents a line, but no other market would accept his verse.

Poetry journals to which he occasionally submitted a piece would return them, asking him to tone down the bitterness and rebellion. So, by 1930, when the demand for his fiction reached the point where he was earning a decent income he had all but quit writing verse. In 1932, he wrote: "I wish I could give more time to verse, but the necessity of making a living crowds it out. The last verse I sold was stuff written years ago, and revamped, that is, pulled out of the unpublished archives and polished up a bit. Occasionally I go over rhymes I wrote a long time ago, and find I can iron out kinks that appeared impossible at the time of the original forging."

A few years prior to his death, Howard spoke of attempting to privately publish a collection of his verse, but nothing ever came of this. Shortly after his son's death, Dr. Howard attempted to find a publisher for a collection of the verse, but was unsuccessful. In 1957, I compiled *Always Comes Evening*, containing all the then known verse by Howard. This was published for my be Arkham House, and is now out of print and very scarce.

*Singers in the Shadows* was compiled by Howard himself and submitted, early in 1928, to Albert & Charles Boni, who returned the manuscript, saying

that they were not at that time publishing verse. There is no record that it was ever resubmitted, and, apart from a collection composed equally of his verse and that of two friends—Tevis Clyde Smith and Lenore Preece—was the only recorded attempt to market a collection of his verse. The manuscript was found among some of Howard's papers in 1966, and this limited edition was conceived at that time.

—Glenn Lord

Pasadena, Texas  
25 September 1969





# SINGERS IN THE SHADOWS



## ZUKALA'S HOUR

High in his dim, ghost-haunted tower  
    Zukala sits alone;  
Like a spider, spinning his webs of power  
    Upon his moon pale throne.

All through the long, star-spectral night  
    The tower knows no tread,  
Save for, sometimes, the cery, light  
    Swift footfalls of the dead.

He does not sleep and his eyes are deep  
    As the Seas of Falgarai;  
And he moves his sceptre but to sweep  
    The dim stars out of the sky.

And when the wind is out of the east  
    And the bent moon's silver gleam  
Makes pale the stars like ghosts at feast,  
    Zukala sits a-dream.

But when the wind is out of the north  
    And the grey light lifts for morn  
Zukala harries his Sendings forth  
    To know if a child be born.

And the babe that is born in that mystic hour,  
    In the time of the paling light,  
Is cursed with the gift of Zukala's power—  
    The gift of second sight.

For an unseen web from the mystic shores  
    Upon his soul is thrown  
And though his brothers may number scores  
    That babe must walk alone.

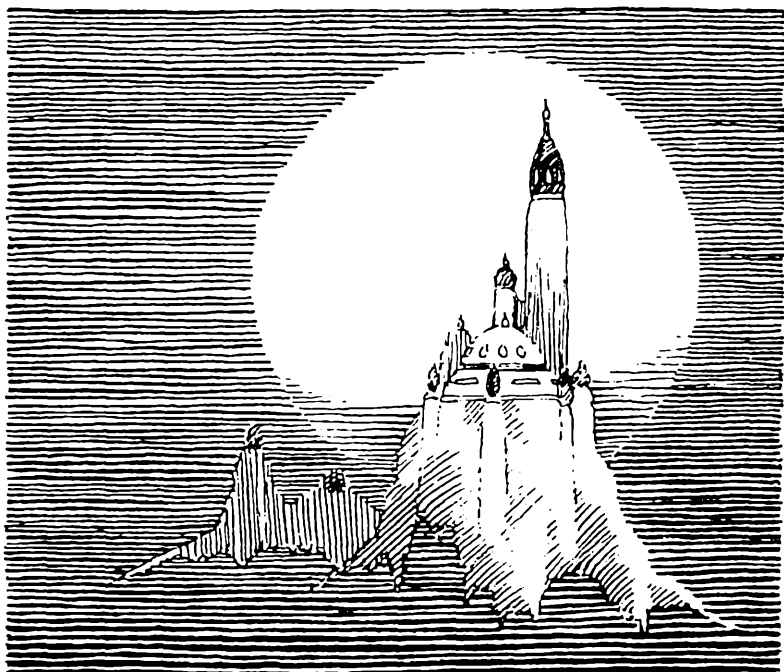
He shall walk in lands that are dim and grey,  
    Yet never shall he take fright,  
Though ghosts shall whisper to him by day  
    And walk at his side by night.

His brothers may sing to the echoing sky,  
    Proud lords of the Universe,  
But he shall see with an unveiled eye,  
    For that is Zukala's Curse.

He shall see that the world is fog and dust,  
    Blind Destiny all that rules;  
The gold that he gains shall be as rust  
    And his brothers empty fools.

Ambition shall be but a broken goad;  
Hollow shall be his mirth.  
The pathway of ghosts shall be his road  
And the wastelands of the earth.

Empty shall be the cheers of hosts  
Though he win to all heights of power.  
For he is destined to walk with ghosts  
That is born in Zukala's Hour.



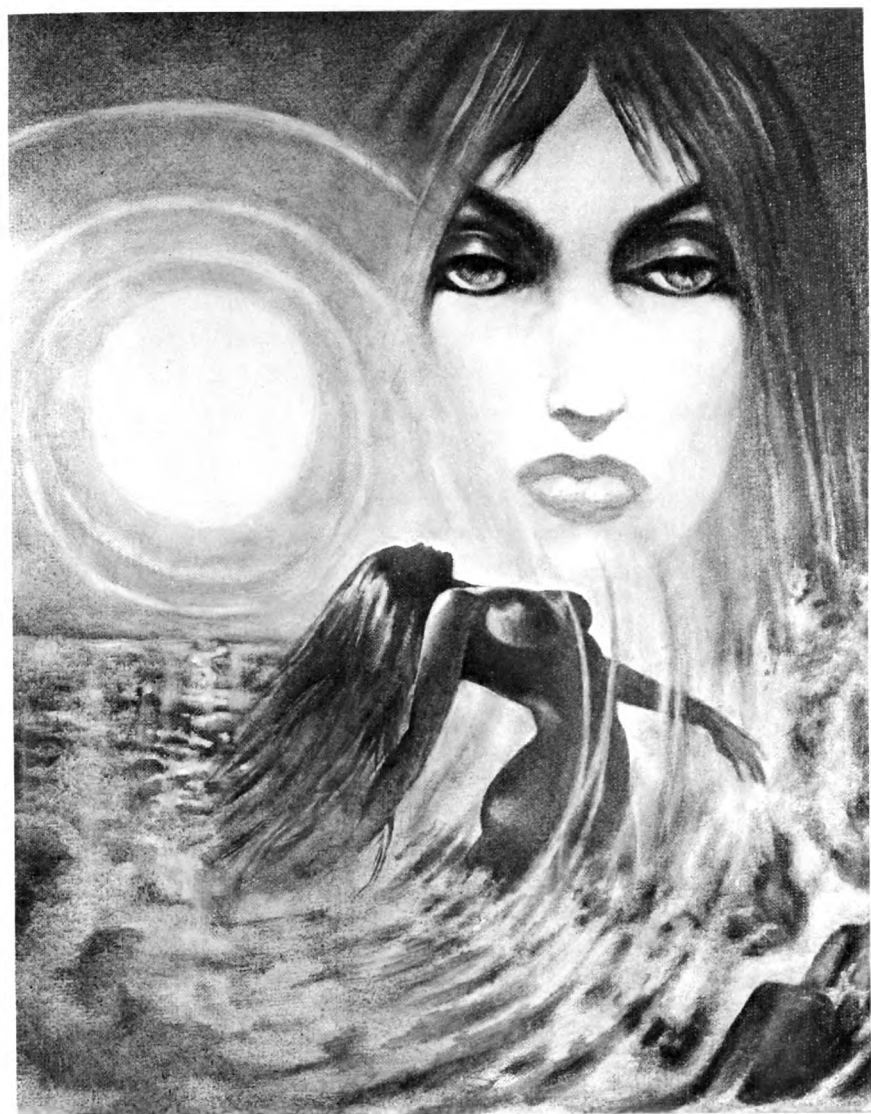
## THE SEA-WOMAN

The wild sea is beating  
    Against the grey sands;  
The woman, the sea-woman,  
    Stretches her hands.

Her eyes they are mystic  
    And cold as the sea,  
With slender white fingers  
    She beckons to me —

*There are woods in the sea  
    Though the leaves are all grey,  
The ocean's pale roses  
    Lift dim in the spray.*

I follow — I follow —  
    The grey sea-gull flies —  
Ah, woman, sea-woman,  
    There's death in your eyes.



## THE BRIDE OF CUCHULAIN

Love, we have laughed at living,  
Love, we have laughed at death;  
At ecstasy and giving, and all vain things of breath.

We know, for we rent the curtain  
To gaze behind the lure,  
That naught but death is certain, that naught but  
    death is pure.

From our thrones of ivory, flattered  
The scarlet courtiers come;  
Challenging ages hoary, pulses the regal drum.

But the breeze of the night is dreary  
And the moon is bent and old  
And your head on my breast is weary and my soul  
    is thin and cold.

Come to the upland meadows,  
Come to the ocean grey;  
We and the world are shadows swiftly drifting away.

There, where the grey sea crashes  
Along the ancient shore,  
There where the spent spray lashes white sands  
    forevermore,



I will weave the pale sea flowers  
To twine on your pallid brow  
That you may forget lost hours and Time be  
only Now.

Then all Earth's joys and sorrows  
Shall pass like ocean spray  
Till all the sad tomorrows fade in one dim 'Today'.

## THE STRANGER

The wind blew in from sea-ward,  
    The day was soft and fine.  
He lounged on the wide veranda  
    And sipped at his Spanish wine.

Slender and darkly handsome,  
    Amusedly worldly-wise,  
Drawing the stares like a magnet  
    With his strange inscrutable eyes.

Tolerant, an air of culture.  
    The women stared, passing by.  
Courteous, suave and friendly  
    To a stranger—such as I.

We sat and we talked for hours,  
    His evenly cadenced tone  
Weaved a charm of wonder  
    Till my thoughts were all his own.

Till the sun sank over the board-walk  
And the stars began to shine  
And to a toast of my wishing  
His goblet clinked to mine.

Yonder he sits and watches  
The people who wander by,  
Debonair, slim and courtly,  
With his strange inscrutable eye.

But I sit no more at his table,  
And others may hear his tales,  
For I saw when he lifted his goblet  
The talons he wears of nails.



## REBEL

I lived upon the earth of yore,  
An outlaw swart and fell,  
And ankle-deep, at last, in gore  
I waded into Hell.

And where the gleaming charcoal sheened  
I dared the Devil's ire,  
For man is stronger than the fiend  
And fiercer than the fire.

I swaggered through the Flaming Land  
'Mid shadows red and black  
And gripped him by his taloned hand  
And smote him on the back.

"Damnation's fire!" I roared, "I trow  
"I heard the goblets clink!  
"Have ye not courtesy enow  
"To bid an old friend drink?

“I served ye long upon the earth  
“Whose lands I held in fee  
“And if I may not join your mirth  
“No comely host are ye!”

“Aye, I remember ye!” he spake  
“Ye wrought full long and good.  
“Come sit ye down your thirst to slake  
“In wine of Christian blood.”

The fiends came marching with the feast  
Across the flaming stones.  
While Satan chose a writhing priest  
I gnawed a bishop’s bones.

We revelled with a savage zest  
And mocked the screeching horde  
And at each fierce, sulphurous jest  
With evil laughter roared.

The red wine mounted to my head  
And fired my passion fell;  
“This dare into your beard!” I said,  
“I’ll gamble you for Hell!”

His laughter rose in red disdain  
Among the sooty flues.  
Said he, “ ‘Tis naught I have to gain  
“And naught ye have to lose.”

“Nay, I’ve a girl that’s worth it all,  
“I would not give nor sell,  
“All golden-haired and fair and tall.  
“I’ll match her ‘gainst your Hell!”

“But she is of the living land!  
“Then how may this thing be?”  
“If I but beckon with my hand  
“To Hell she’ll follow me.”

To watch the game all in a trice  
Were massed the shadow things,  
While on the board we flung the dice—  
The skulls of earthly kings.

They clashed, they crashed along the board  
With sullen clank they fell.  
“Ho ho! I’ve won!” the Devil roared,  
“Bid down your wench to Hell!”

I leaped across the flaming room  
Amid the brimstone's glare.  
I heard the sullen ocean boom  
And flashed into the air.

I leaped along the old time road,  
White in the moonbeam haze,  
And to her latticed window strode  
As in my boyhood days.

Across her winsome, youthful cheek  
The moonlight's silver fell.  
"Rise up, rise up! And do not speak  
"But follow me to Hell."

Swift from her window then she sprung  
And never word did say  
As lightly o'er my arm I flung  
And carried her away.

We whirled like phantoms through the air  
And rose a fearful yell  
As through the crimson sulphur flare  
I bore her into Hell.

And Satan smacked his lustful lips  
And burning was his stare,  
While to her slim and shapely hips  
Fell down her golden hair.

Then swift and sudden did I see  
That I had been a fool  
And that slim girl was more to me  
Than all of Hades' rule.

And as he seized her by the hand  
I snatched from out its place  
A scarlet, blazing, Hell-fire brand  
And dashed it in his face.

He staggered backward with a yell!  
I snatched her and fled fast  
While on our tracks the hosts of Hell  
Came flying on the blast.

We fled like phantoms on the wind.  
Far, far and far away,  
We left the flaming hordes behind  
And flashed into the day.





I dare not now the halls of Hell  
But roam about the earth,  
An eery flitting phantom fell,  
A wind like unseen mirth.

But in the nighttime oft I whirl  
To a bower by the sea  
And from the window steals a girl  
With golden hair, to me.

She'll be no other's love nor wife  
And here she does not err  
For though for me she'd given life  
I gave up Hell for her.



## WHITE THUNDER

I was a child in Cornwall where the mountains meet  
the shore;

I lay on the cliffs at even and I heard the combers  
roar.

It was thunder, high white thunder, leaping o'er the  
tossing ridges;

Roaring down the jade green valleys, wild as Neptune  
and as free;

Spanning wave and shore and sky rim with a million  
unseen bridges

Till the booming cliffs re-echoed to the thunder of  
the sea.

I was a boy in London, timid, callow, amazed

But I heard beyond the city when the lights through  
the night fogs blazed;

Heard the thunder, high white thunder, booming far  
beyond the sky line,

Roaring up the restless vastness of the globe encircling  
sea,

Spray bejeweled, white and sapphire, gleaming in the  
topaz sky shine;

Through the mutter of the city high white thunder  
called to me.

I was a youth in Delhi and I left the brooding walls  
For the hills that are gods of twilight where the wind  
forever brawls.

There was thunder, high white thunder, where the  
northern crags were looming,  
Smiting on the reeling mountains with the hammer  
blows of Thor,  
Fraught with lore of rugged ages, shouting wonders in  
its booming  
Till the clashing crags re-echoed like a planetary war.

Now I am a man in Flanders; I crouch in the mire and  
see  
The white smoke leap and billow to the shout of the  
shells that flee;

See the thunder, high white thunder through the  
screaming air come soaring,  
Swirling like white clouds at even when the breakers  
rock the seas.  
Let me revel in its fury, let me triumph in its roaring  
Ere the high white thunder bear me into high  
eternities.

## THE MEN THAT WALK WITH SATAN

The men that walk with Satan, they have forgot their  
birth.

Their dreams are lost in stillness in the ages of the  
earth.

White ghosts are in their sighing and death is in their  
mirth.

The men that walk with Satan, their years are as a  
day;

They know each generation as a dream that drifts  
away.

And they bid mankind make merry and revel while  
they may.

The men that walk with Satan, their eyes are ghostly  
meres;

They know no more the passions, the hatreds and the  
fears.

Their souls have turned to sea fog in the drifting of  
the years.

The men that walk with Satan, they know the gods  
are small  
For they have trod the cons and seen the idols fall.  
Their footsteps waked the echoes through proud  
Belshazzar's hall.

The men that walk with Satan, they feign would turn  
and sleep  
But through their drowsing visions flames fierce  
and scarlet leap.  
So they tread the years forever—and their eyes are  
strange and deep.

The men that walk with Satan, they sit where glories  
shine,  
Where kings and lovely women grow radiant with  
wine;  
But they see forgotten cities where the desert mosses  
twine.

The men that walk with Satan, they know that gold is  
rust,  
No more they lash their spirits to stir their ancient  
lust;  
Their sins are of the ages long crumbled to the dust.

The men that walk with Satan, they dream of ancient  
wars.  
They stride the skies at even on sunset's burning bars.  
The men that walk with Satan, their eyes are in the  
stars.

## THUS SPAKE SVEN THE FOOL

The night is dark; the fenlands lie asleep;

    In crimson fogs is cloaked the bloody moon.

    Afar the dreary laughter of a loon

Shakes with vague fear the slumber of the sheep.

The rushes stir like waves upon the deep.

    I do not fear, though all about me soon

    I hear the whispered tread of ghostly shoon

Glide through the night, some grisly tryst to keep.

I weary of the dusty roads of men;

    I know of beings that walk fire-arrayed,

        Whose eyes are deep with wisdom strange  
        and hoary.

I shall go forth and live upon the fen

    And race and laugh with creatures of the shade

    And don the scarlet cloak of purgatory.



## THE WITCH

We set a stake amid the stones  
That crown the headland shore,  
Where wild the sea-wind ever drones  
And where the combers roar.

Then leg and ankle, wrist and hand,  
We bound her to the stake  
With chains that might the fire withstand,  
And never a word she spake.

The grey gulls whirled by, light and fleet;  
Loud called the hooded tern.  
We fired the fagots at her feet  
And left her there to burn.

Over her bare breasts flowed her hair,  
About her leaped the flame;  
But as we turned to leave her there  
She spoke no word of blame.

I turned upon the sloping lea,  
A moment paused, alone,  
Half fearful, gazing, lest I see  
The Devil claim his own.



About her breast the red fires gleamed,  
The dark smoke caught her hair,  
And to my wondering eyes it seemed  
A halo floated there.

Fools! Fools! A human soul be cleaned  
By fire of Satan's taint—  
'Tis *we* are henchmen of the Fiend!  
For—we—have—burned—a—Saint!

## SACRIFICE

The baron sat in his lordly seat;  
The beggar lay at his gate;  
But hate was red in the baron's soul;  
In the soul of the beggar, hate.

The baron stared in his blood-red wine  
And gulped it with a curse;  
But the beggar marked in the dust with a staff  
And passers heard the jar of his laugh  
Like coins in a brazen purse.

The baron rode to the clashing lists  
On a horse like a white-winged gull  
That had born him on many a raid;  
But the beggar stole from glade to glade  
Thumbing a worn dagger blade  
With a face like a grinning skull.

The baron died in the dim of dusk,  
The beggar in grey of morn;  
One where the knights charge rank on rank,  
One by a forest tall and dank—  
Both to the red god's scorn.

The scorn of the scarlet, primal god,  
Whose laugh is a fiery breath;  
Whose whisper tells of hideous things  
And sends men down to death.

So the baron went to his fate in wrath,  
As the beggar to his fate;  
For high or low the man must go  
To the beck of the god of Hate.



## HADRIAN'S WALL

Against these stones red waves of carnage brake;  
    Along these parapets Rome's armor shone.  
    Here swarmed the Picts, when ghastly tribes  
        unknown  
Came trooping down from heath and mountain lake;  
Here leaped the Saxon sword, red thirst to slake.  
    Here sounded night on night the war-horn's  
        drone  
    Mocking the desperate Britons left alone  
When 'neath her feet Rome felt her empire shake.

Still, sullen giants born of night and gloom,  
Beyond, the purple, brooding mountains loom—  
    Symbol of heathen gods that they sent forth,  
The ancient menace of the Northern land:  
A bulwark still, these shattered towers stand  
    Against the mystic hazes of the North.

## NIGHT MOOD

It is my mood to walk in silent streets  
Where lone and shadowy cats prowl lonesome beats.

Old sidewalks, rough and worn from years of shoes;  
Past picket fences, garbage and refuse.

Old trees, whose shadowy forms the starlight weaves  
With dim, white splashes filtering through their leaves.

And a lone arc light, guttering through the night  
While countless moths fly 'round and 'round its light.

## SHADOWS

Grey ghost, dim ghost,  
    Moon and shadow spawn,  
Strange are the far flung  
    Ways you have gone—  
Wailing through the starlight  
    Flecing at the dawn.

Grey ghost, dim ghost,  
    (Moon upon the hill,  
Slender fingers rapping  
    At my window sill.)—

Eyes that haunt the shadows  
    Feet that shun the light—  
Grey ghost, dim ghost  
    Where do you walk tonight?



## THE LOST GALLEY

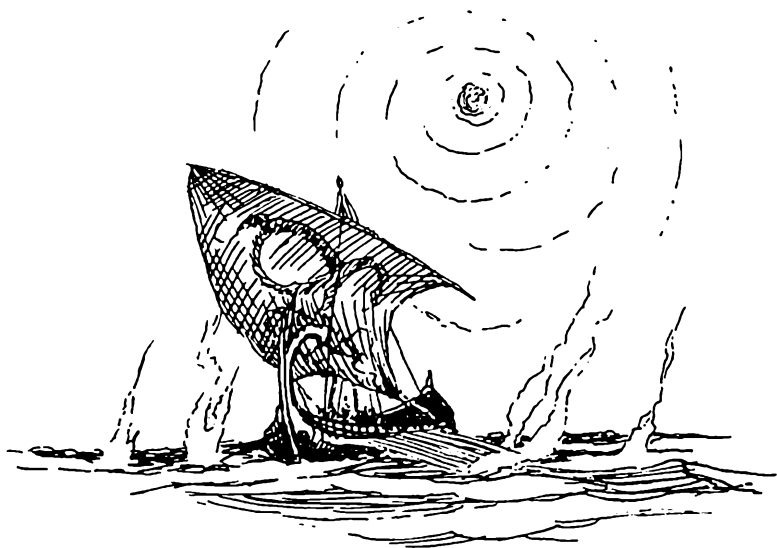
The sun was brazen in the sky,  
    Like fire the sullen waves were red;  
We watched the droning sea-gulls fly  
    About the lurching main-mast head.  
Each swaying oar against the banks  
    Cadenced a steady, creaking strum.  
Across the world in marching ranks  
    We watched the restless surges come.  
From off the waves the hell-heat flowed,  
    The very sails seemed scorched and sere;  
They sweated, screeched and fought, who rowed,  
    As on we plied with dip and veer.

The whips began to swish and crack  
    But that strange heat still fiercer flayed  
More than the lash each naked back  
    As o'er a blazing sea we swayed.  
The oars smoked in the crimson sea,  
    The gilt work melted in the flame;  
The surges marched unceasingly,  
    Like waves of molten bronze they came.  
And when we looked to see uprise  
    Some distant shore-line, there was none  
The world was all of burning skies  
    And flaming sea and copper sun.

MARCUS BOAS



There looms no beach, there lifts no shore  
For Satan spun a charm-web fell:  
And so we sail forever more  
Across the molten seas of Hell.



## THE FEAR THAT FOLLOWS

The smile of a child was on her lips—oh, smile  
of a last long rest.  
My arm went up and arm went down and the  
dagger pierced her breast.  
Silent she lay—oh still, oh still!—with the breast  
of her gown turned red.  
Then fear rose up in my soul like death and I  
fled from the face of the dead.  
The hangings rustled upon the walls, velvet and  
black they shook,  
And I thought to see strange shadows flash from  
the dark of each door and nook.  
Tapestries swayed on the ghostly walls as if in a  
wind that blew;  
Yet never a breeze stole through the rooms and  
my black fear grew and grew.

Moonlight dappled the pallid sward as I climbed  
o'er the window sill;  
I looked not back at the darkened house which  
lay so grim and still.  
The trees reached phantom hands to me, their  
branches brushed my hair,  
Footfalls whispered amid the grass, yet never a  
man was there.  
The shades loomed black in the forest deeps,  
black as the doom of death;  
Amid the whispers of shapes unseen I stole with  
bated breath,  
Till I came at last to a ghostly mere bordered  
with silver sands;  
A faint mist rose from its shimmering breast as I  
knelt to lave my hands.

The waters mirrored my haggard face, I bent  
close down to see—  
Oh, Mother of God! A grinning skull leered up  
from the mere at me!  
With a gibbering scream I rose and fled till I  
came to a mountain dim  
And a great black crag in the blood-red moon  
loomed up like a gibbet grim.  
Then down from the great red stars above, each  
like a misty plume,  
There fell on my face long drops of blood and I  
knew at last my doom.  
Then I turned me slow to the only trail that was  
left upon the earth for me,  
The trail that leads to the hangman's cell and the  
grip of the gallows tree.



## THE TAVERN

There stands, close by a dim, wolf-haunted wood,  
A tavern like a monster, brooding thing  
About its sullen gables no birds sing.  
Oft a lone traveller, when the moon is blood,  
Lights from his horse in quest of sleep and meal.  
His footfalls fade within and sound no more;  
He comes no forth; but from a secret door  
Bearing a grisly burden, shadows steal.

By day, 'neath trees whose silent, green leaves glisten,  
The tavern crouches, hating day and light.  
A lurking vampire, terrible and lean;  
Sometimes behind its windows may be seen  
Vague leprous faces, haggard, fungus-white,  
That peer and start and ever seem to listen.

## DESTINATION

Against the east a sombre spire loomed o'er a  
dusky, brooding wood;  
Against the west the sunset's fire lay like a fading  
smear of blood.  
The stranger pushed through tangled boughs; the  
forest towered stark and grim,  
Fit haunting place for fiends' carouse, but silent  
in the dusk and dim.

Anon the stranger paused to hark; no wind among  
the branches beat  
But bats came wheeling in the dark and serpents  
hissed beneath his feet.  
Bleak stars blinked out, of leprous hue; the forest  
stretched its clutching arms;  
A hag-lean moon swam up and threw gnarled  
shadows into monstrous forms.



Then of great towers he was 'ware, and on the  
    sombre, crowning spire,  
The moon that gibbet-etched it there, smote with  
    an eery, lurid fire.  
Above the forest's silent halls, he saw the sullen  
    bastions frown  
And o'er the towers and the walls strange gleams of  
    light crawled up and down.

He scaled the steep and stood before the donjon.  
    With his steel-tipped stave  
He smote the huge, bronze studded door. (And  
    yet his blows no echoes gave.)  
The sullen door swung wide apace and framed in  
    unnamed radiance dim  
A grisly, *horned*, inhuman face with yellow eyes  
    gazed out at him.



“Enter and follow where I lead. Haste, for the  
lurking midnight nears.

“Your coming aye has been decreed for thrice  
four hundred thousand years.”

About, the shadows seemed to glide, like ghosts  
of were-wolves, taloned, fanged.

The stranger followed his strange guide, the  
massive door behind him clanged.

Then towers and shadows faded out into a world  
of leaping flame

Where to and fro and all about dim phantom  
figures went and came.

Arms tossed above the molten tide, the sparks in  
crimson shadows fell.

Red mountains smoldered. At his side a vague  
voice murmured, “This is Hell.”

## THE ROAD TO HELL

Along the road that leads to Hell  
    We strode, a merry band;  
Belshazzar, Nero, Jezebel,  
    Cain with his bloody hand.

We shuffled through the scarlet dust,  
    A roaring, careless throng;  
Red mountains bowed before our lust,  
    We shook the stars with song.

Red cinder showers rose and fell,  
    As with a furious din  
We battered at the gates of Hell,  
    Roaring to be let in.

Then Satan rose in angry pride;  
    “Who comes in such rude way?”  
“The souls are we, who would not bide  
    “Until the Judgment Day.”

“Let saints and friars meekly sleep  
    “Till Gabriel’s trumpets boom;  
“But we, whose souls be red and deep,  
    “Go laughing to our doom!”

“Red laughter, salt with savage brine,  
    “From crimson seas of sin!  
“Unbar the brazen gates, you swine,  
    “And let your masters in!”

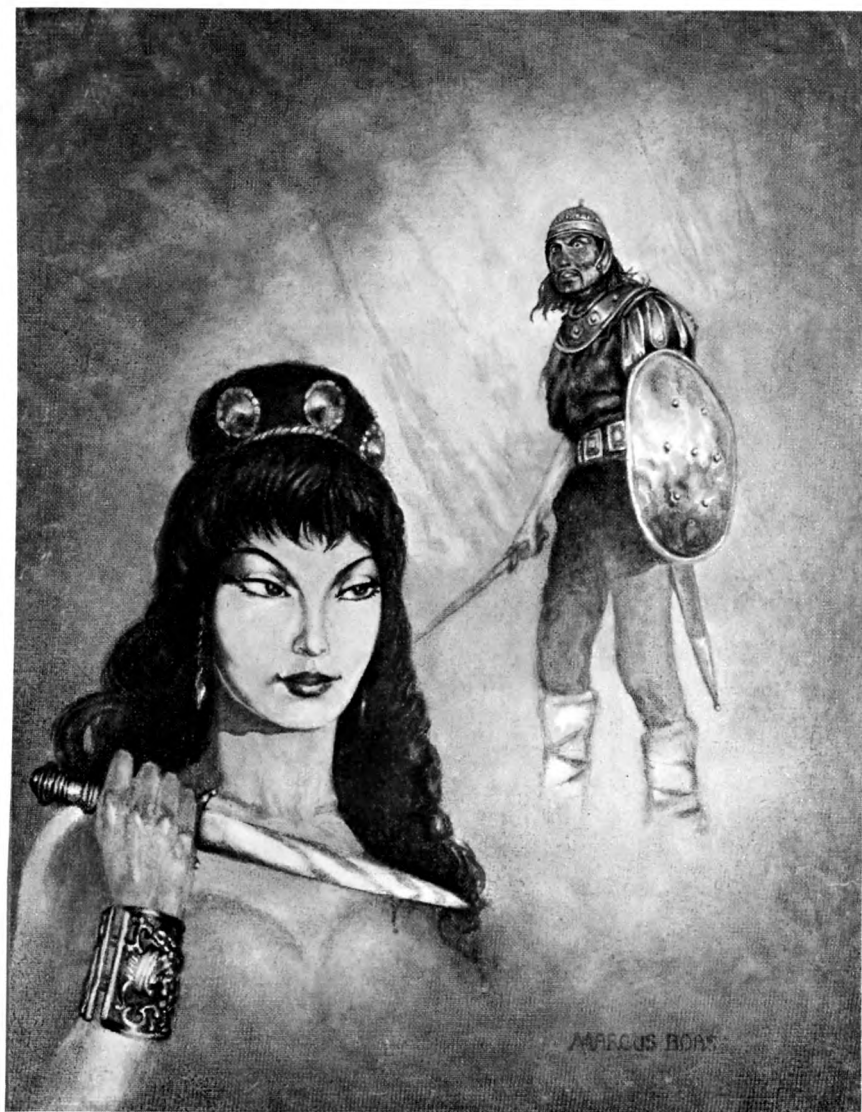
“Shackled on earth by fate and star,  
    “We writhed beneath the rods;  
“But by the gods, in death we are  
    “‘The rulers of the gods!’”

## ATTILA RIDES NO MORE

Across the silent sands we sprang  
    Before the royal tent  
And to our tramp the dim wind sang  
    A weird accompaniment.  
We flung aside the silken door  
    And halted in amaze;  
No wilder sight was seen before;  
    Men shouldered men to gaze.

A-gibber on her throne of gilt  
    The naked empress smiled  
And toyed with her red dagger hilt  
    As a mother with a child.  
The plundered amber, gold and jade  
    Gleamed round like coals of Hell  
Then smoldered to a redder shade  
    To swords that rose and fell.

While round the stardards and the flags there  
    whispered, o'er and o'er  
The desert wind amid the tents: "King Atla rides  
    no more."



## THE TWIN GATES

The gates of Hades stand ajar;  
Above the portals, blazing clear  
Are words that may be read afar:  
“Abandon hope, who enter here.”

Above Life's portals stands a screed  
Where, through the mists approaching near,  
The quivering, unborn soul may read:  
“Abandon hope, who enter here.”









1500 copies of this book were printed and bound by the CSA Printing and Bindery, Inc., Lakemont, Georgia, from 11 Point Baskerville Medium Type on 70 lb. Finch Opaque Cream White Paper.





